

Meet the Dogs of Bedlam Farm

- **Bibliographic Information:**

Author & Illustrator: Jon Katz

Publisher: Henry Holt

Publication date: 2011

- **Summary:** Bedlam Farm is a very special farm that has four lovable dogs that help run it. The dog's names are Rose, Izzy, Frieda, and Lenore. These dogs are like a family and do a lot of things together. Each dog has her own story of how she came to be at the farm. Each dog also has her own special job on the farm. While reading this story, discover how these dogs came to be on the farm and how each one does her own job. Although each dog is different, they are a family and each individual is important and essential to the running of Bedlam Farm.

- **Awards Received:** Charlotte Zolotow Honor Book (2011)

- **Review:** From the Chicago Tribune (2011), "This photographic essay aims at the heart of dog group dynamics on Jon Katz's farm. Each dog works. Rose is a border collie, herding sheep. Izzy, also a border collie and once abandoned, now works as a therapy dog, in hospitals and nursing homes. (The pictures are especially brilliant of Izzy's world.) Frieda, previously a wild dog, part Rottweiler and part German shepherd, guards the farm. At the end of each section, we see Lenore, a black Labrador, interact with each, but we are always left with the question, "But what is Lenore's job?" A highly specific, not preachy, charmer."

—Mary Harris Russell

- **Author Information (He is also the illustrator.):**

<http://www.blueflowerarts.com/jon-katz>

<http://www.bedlamfarm.com/>

- **Discussion Questions:**

- **Pre-reading questions:**

- What does the cover of the book tell you about the setting of the book?
- What do you think the dogs do on the farm?
- Do you think the dogs get along? Why or why not?

- **Questions while reading:**

- What do you think is Lenore's job?
- If you had to pick one of the dogs to be your pet which one would you pick? Why?
- If you were a dog on a farm, what job would you like to do?

- **Post-reading questions:**

- Which dog's job do you think is the most important? Why?

- What character traits does Lenore have that are importance for everyone (even people) to have?
- What do the dogs of Bedlam Farm teach us about accepting everyone and getting along?

- **Curricular Activities**

- **Reading/oral language:** Have students pre-read the book by quickly scanning through the book to gain some background knowledge alone. Then read through the book as a class using popcorn reading to have the students practice reading out loud.
- **Writing:** Have students pretend they are one of the dogs. Using the dog's point of view, write a journal entry on a day in the life of one of the dogs. Include specifics such as what they did and saw during the day.
- **Math/ Technology:**
 - Reading could be supplemented with a lesson on adding and subtracting. To make more hands on, use either dog shaped stickers or little plastic dog manipulatives. Have problems such as "If you have 4 dogs and 7 more dogs, how many dogs do you have all together?"
 - Can play the game Toasty at the Farm found at <http://www.dressup121.com/play-toasty-at-the-farm-game.html> which involves a dog rounding up sheep at a farm. Students could be allowed to play as a reward for finishing another assignment.
- **Science:** Learn about different types of dogs. Have each student pick a different breed of dog to research and find information about. Have them create a pamphlet about their breed of dog that could be used to inform a buyer on different attributes and physical characteristics of the breed.
- **Social Studies:** Bedlam Farm is located in Upstate New York. Learn about the Northeast region of the United States (which New York is a part of). Use pictures in the book to make predictions about what the physical landforms and climate is like in the Northeast region. After making predictions, learn about the real facts, and then compare them to the predictions and see if they students were right.
- **Art:** Have students create their own farm on a sheet of paper. Make the only requirement be that they have to include aspects of the farm that they read about in the book. Provide 3-D materials such as cotton balls for the sheep, dog stickers, pieces of hay, and etc.
- **Drama:** Using the book as a basis, create a short script that demonstrates all or many of the activities that the dogs do every day. Assign students parts and act out the scenes of the book.

- **Related Books**

- *Charlie the Ranch Dog* by: Ree Drummond
- *Farm Dog Martha* by: Susan Meddaugh
- *Farm Dogs* by: Kathryn Clay
- *Biscuit Steals a Fish: The Adventures of Sailor the Farm Dog* by: Vickie Spencer-Lahman

- **Other titles by Katz:**

- Kit DeLeeuw Series

- Books about Dogs
 - *A Dog Year: Twelve Months, Four Dogs and Me*
 - *The New Work of Dogs: Tending to Life, Love and Family*
 - *Dog Days: Dispatches from Bedlam Farm*
 - *Katz on Dogs: A Commonsense Guide to Training and Living with Dogs*
 - *A Good Dog: The Story of Orson Who Changed My Life*
- **Websites for further study or enrichment:**
 - <http://www.silvergames.com/virtual-farm>
 - This website has a game about a virtual farm. The player is required to help run the farm by doing chores such as growing crops. The game teaches students life lessons such as responsibility and time management. The game also gives the player a look at what farm life is like. Allow students to play as a reward for completing other assignments.
 - http://www.hobbyfarms.com/farm-breeds/farm-pets_farm-dogs_all_landing.aspx
 - This website provides information about different breeds of dogs that are commonly used on farm. Each dog breed page provides a picture and a profile of each breed. This website could be extremely useful to learn more about the breed mentioned in the book.
 - <http://www.bedlamfarm.com/>
 - This website is Jon Katz's own personal website that tells all about Bedlam Farm which is where he lives. In addition to information about Jon Katz it has different tabs such as a journal of Bedlam Farm, videos of animals on the farm, and information on other books he has written. Can be used to give students more background information about the farm and the animals that are there.